ACTION NEA-5

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AIRGRAM

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HANDLING INDICATOR

1963 OCT 15 AM 11 34

TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INFO: ATHENS, NEA/GTI

RM/AN
ANALYSIS & DISTRIBUTION
DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/IR

RETURNED TO DATE 6 MAY 1982

FROM : Amconsul THESSALONIKI

DATE: Oct. 17, 1963

SUBJECT: ConGen A-20, October 10, 1963

REF :

On Sunday, October 15, George PAPANDREOU opened the CU political campaign with a speech in Thessaloniki*. Estimates of the crowd listening to the CU leader vary widely, as follows:

Thessaloniki - double the CARAMANLIS crowd (which Thessaloniki had avoided estimating)

Makedonia - 2-3 times size of Caramanlis crowd (which Makedonia had set at 40,000). . . . . 80 - 120,000

To Vima - one of the largest gatherings ever held in Northern Greece - larger than Caramanlis crowd. . . . . More than Caramanlis

Athens Post - larger than the Caramanlis crowd (which the Post had not estimated) and double the 1961 CU rally in Thessaloniki. More than Caramanlis

Drassis - smaller than the Caramanlis crowd (which Drassis had set at 150,000). . . . . Less than 150,000

Ellinikos Vorras - significantly smaller than the Caramanlis crowd (which Ellinikos Vorras had set at 150,000). . . . . Less than 150,000

*A summary of the speech is being transmitted by separate airgram.

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12/21/65 RM/R K-file Action noted TJ Hoctor/gp

Drafted by: RSFolsom:bck 10/15/63

Contents and Classification Approved by:

Clearances:

Thessaloniki Police - 20% less than the Caramanlis crowd, including 10-20% leftists 80-90,000

Unbiased observers agree that the crowd gathered to hear Papandreou was larger than that of the previous Sunday by 20-50%. Thus, if the figure 100-110,000 is accepted for the Caramanlis rally, Papandreou must be credited with 120-165,000.

The CU press has asserted that the crowd was made up primarily of city dwellers, that only "symbolic" representatives came from the rural areas, that EDA followers abstained from attendance, and that the meeting was characterized by greater spontaneity than the Caramanlis gathering.

The ERE press varied somewhat in its reporting on the crowd. Drassis, for example, asserted that it was strengthened by EDA units shouting "114" and "Fascism must not pass," etc., that it included many farmers and that it lacked enthusiasm. Ellinikos Vorras and Eleftheros Laos, however, refrained from mentioning any EDA participation and contented themselves with asserting that the crowd lacked enthusiasm.

Unbiased observers noted that the crowd contained far less people in village dress than the Caramanlis gathering, that the loudspeaking system functioned well in contrast to the poor functioning a week earlier, and that the crowd was much more articulate.

In reporting on the speech, the CU press emphasized that Papandreou had replied fully to Caramanlis, that he had emphasized his respect for the institutions of the State (Gendarmerie, King, present Caretaker Government, etc.) and that he had thrown back the charge of defaming Greece onto the past ERE governments for crimes, scandals, and mismanagement of State affairs. The CU press also underlined Papandreou's attack on Caramanlis' foreign and domestic policies and stressed in contrast the constructive nature of Papandreou's program as revealed to date (noting that he promised to reveal more of his program later).

The pro-ERE press, on the other hand, attacked Papandreou for "insults to Caramanlis, demagoguery, cheap promises and a sterile denial of all the creative work of ERE."

In summing up their reactions, the CU press hailed the events of Sunday as those of a "Day of Resurrection" ensuring a CU victory at the polls. The pro-ERE press, on the other hand, deprecated the whole affair with Ellinikos Vorras going so far as to claim 64% of the vote for ERE on November 3.

In summary, Papandreou was favored by the same beautiful autumn weather as Caramanlis a week earlier; he had the same Sunday strollers; he spoke

just after the termination of a big football game; he had the support of good organization and better loudspeaking arrangements. Thus, conditions were relatively parallel. If the size and enthusiasm of crowds is an index of popularity, Papandreou is more popular in Thessaloniki than Caramanlis.

As with the Caramanlis crowd, it remains to be seen if crowds are a measure of votes, organization or curiosity.

Robert S. Folsom
Consul General

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